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INTERACTIVE CONSUMER PRODUCT PROMOTION METHOD AND MATCH GAME

3

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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5 I. Field of The Invention

6 The present invention relates to an interactive product
7 promotion method and a match game associated therewith.
8 More particularly, the product promotion method includes
9 accessing a database from a remote interactive electronic
10 display via the Internet or other electronic link. A screen
11 display of a list of product categories along with a
12 representation of the match game is accessed and displayed
13 on the interactive display. Selected categories are used to
14 generate printed product promotion information at the site
15 of the interactive display as well as being used in the
16 match game to determine instant winners.

17

18 II. Description of The Related Art

19 In marketing of consumer products, particularly in the
20 United States, it has long been common for manufacturers to
21 offer discount coupons, either by direct mail or by inserts
22 in newspapers and magazines. Such coupons can be used while
23 purchasing the product to receive a direct price reduction
24 from the retail merchant. A disadvantage of this approach
25 is the requirement for the consumer to clip and maintain a

1 coupon file, accounting for expiration dates, differences
2 among vendors, etc. and to be able to access the correct
3 coupon at the point of sale. It takes a somewhat dedicated
4 shopper to take full advantage of this type of discount
5 coupon, thus limiting the effective advertising audience for
6 the manufacturers. In addition, the merchant has the
7 inconvenience and cost associated with collecting the
8 coupons and forwarding them to the manufacturers to, in
9 turn, recoup the discounts.

10 Another common marketing approach has been to attach
11 refund offers directly to the product, or to display them
12 alongside the product on a retail shelf, which refunds can
13 be mailed in to the manufacturer, along with a proof of
14 purchase, to get a refund or rebate on the product. Some
15 retail merchants provide a central bulletin board where all
16 of the rebate forms are placed, requiring interested
17 consumers to look through all of the forms to locate the one
18 or ones in which they are interested. In addition to this
19 time consuming search for relevant refund offers, there are
20 several additional disadvantages of this rebate approach.
21 Members of "discount or rebate clubs" will often take an
22 entire booklet of refund forms from a display for trade or
23 sale within the club, thus totally disrupting the
24 manufacturer's promotional scheme. The forms must be
25 printed and distributed by the manufacturers to

1 participating retailers, which represents a significant
2 ongoing cost. Often manufacturers can supply only the
3 largest retailers with refund forms, which diminishes the
4 effectiveness of promotions by virtually eliminating small
5 merchants from the marketing effort. Consumers often do not
6 know of the existence of the refund until he or she actually
7 examines the product or the display in the store.
8 Furthermore, since rebates are typically for nominal
9 amounts, such as \$.50 to \$2.00, for example, the postage
10 costs to mail in these forms for a rebate are often
11 prohibitive if the consumer is asked to bear them or, if the
12 manufacturer uses prepaid postage, the postage will
13 dramatically increase the promotional costs. The
14 requirement to hand print many envelopes, one for each offer
15 and to send in a separate proof of purchase, typically a
16 store receipt, with each offer causes additional
17 inconvenience. Lastly, the physical distribution of coupons
18 or rebate offers by free standing inserts, newspapers,
19 magazines and direct mail offers uses substantial valuable
20 resources, e.g. paper, ink, electricity, petroleum products
21 and other chemicals. Furthermore, estimates are that fewer
22 than 5 percent of unsolicited coupons and rebate offers are
23 ever redeemed.

24 Yet another marketing strategy, more popular in the
25 1950's and 1960's, was the trade stamp approach, in which

1 certain participating retail merchants gave trading stamps
2 to customers at the point of sale. The customers then
3 placed the stamps into books and used the books of stamps to
4 redeem prizes selected from catalogs at stamp redemption
5 centers. This type of promotion is more retail merchant
6 oriented than product oriented, since stamps were typically
7 awarded for all purchases made from the participating
8 merchant. Thus, manufacturers did not usually use trading
9 stamps for specific product promotion. Furthermore, the
10 logistics of maintaining stamp booklets and the requirement
11 to physically exchange the filled booklets at a redemption
12 center were unduly burdensome to the ultimate consumer.

13 Meanwhile, match games of chance, such as Bingo and
14 Keno are becoming more and more popular world wide, and
15 particularly in the United States. Bingo parlors are
16 proliferating, both as charity fund raisers and as legal
17 for-profit ventures. Also, currently at least 30 state and
18 provincial lotteries have adopted a bingo card format for
19 their instant prize winner lottery cards. These cards are
20 typically "Scratcher Bingo" games in which a caller's card
21 and as many as four separate bingo squares are displayed.
22 The player scratches off the play spaces which match numbers
23 on the caller's card, attempting a traditional bingo match
24 of vertical, horizontal or diagonal lines or four corners.
25 The game cards can take a full 10 to 15 minutes to complete

1 and are popular due to the hands-on participation required.
2 Typically a player has a chance to win multiple prizes from
3 a single card via the multiple bingo squares. Keno,
4 although less well known, is proliferating as well with the
5 expansion of legal gambling facilities.

6 It is apparent that, with recent proliferation in
7 personal computers, the availability of on-line services and
8 the Internet, and the increasing popularity of match games,
9 such as Bingo and Keno, a more desirable and convenient
10 method of promoting the sale of consumer products should be
11 developed. Such a promotion method should limit, or even
12 eliminate, the requirement for paper coupons and should
13 allow manufacturers an opportunity to promote specific
14 products without altering product containers or attaching
15 special coupons to the products or store shelves. The
16 method should also allow consumers to personally select
17 product categories and products within the selected
18 categories for refund or discount information in advance of
19 their shopping trip, and, to be effective, the method should
20 generate consumer interest and excitement by the use of a
21 match game format for the selected product categories.
22 Finally, the method should save valuable natural resources
23 by specifically targeting rebate and coupon offers only to
24 those consumers who actively solicit such offers.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention is an interactive consumer product promotion method and match game in which a database is accessed for an information screen which is displayed on an interactive electronic terminal, such as a personal computer, interactive television, in-store kiosk, etc. The displayed information screen typically includes a listing of popular consumer product categories, such as "Detergents"; "Cereals"; "Motor Oil"; "Cookies"; "Crackers"; etc. An instruction set informs the consumer to select a predetermined number of categories for which he or she desires information on available refunds or discounts. Simultaneously displayed on the screen is a matrix of spaces representing a match game such as Bingo or Keno. In the case of Bingo, a Bingo card matrix is displayed and in each space in the displayed matrix a covering symbol is displayed, or, alternatively, a mosaic picture or message can be displayed by combining multiple spaces. A computer associated with the database randomly generates a map of product categories which are associated with respective individual spaces but which are "hidden" by the covering symbols or mosaic. After all of the product categories are selected by the consumer, the database checks each selected category to determine if it is one of the ones randomly mapped to the matrix of spaces. If the selected category is

1 one of those mapped to the matrix of spaces, that particular
2 space is revealed as a match by displaying, for example, the
3 product category number in the space. In the case of Keno,
4 the screen display includes a representation resembling a
5 conventional Keno number field. Selected product category
6 numbers are then used as Keno numbers against a randomly
7 generated sampling of the Keno number field.

8 In either game format, the participating consumer is
9 directed to choose a certain number of categories, eight out
10 of 100, for example, and each selection is compared against
11 the Bingo matrix or the Keno field for matches. In the case
12 of a Bingo game, if the selected categories match to make a
13 complete line horizontally, vertically or diagonally, an "X"
14 formed by two diagonals or all four corners are filled, the
15 consumer wins an "instant" prize. A "free" space will
16 typically be included as one of the spaces. The odds of
17 winning can be decreased at any time by increasing the
18 number of free spaces. In the case of a Keno format, if a
19 certain number of matches are made anywhere on the number
20 field, the player is a winner. Meanwhile, for each product
21 category selected, the player is prompted to select one or
22 more specific products from a category menu with product
23 promotions, coupons, or refund offers being downloaded to
24 the interactive electronic display for each selected
25 product. The product promotions, coupons, or refund offers

1 can be immediately printed or stored for later use by the
2 consumer. In addition, in the event of refund promotions, a
3 custom personalized form can be printed which allows the
4 consumer to submit register receipts, UPC codes or other
5 proofs of purchase for any or all of the selected products
6 in a single envelope in order to secure a single combined
7 electronic funds transfer or mailed refund payment.
8 Alternatively, the form and the proofs of purchase can be
9 electronically scanned into the database.

10

11 Objects and Advantages of the Invention

12 The principle objects and advantages of the invention
13 include: to provide an improved consumer product promotion
14 method including a match game; to provide such a consumer
15 product promotion method in which a consumer accesses a
16 promotion database via an interactive electronic display
17 terminal; to provide such a consumer product promotion
18 method in which a number of product categories are displayed
19 for selection by a consumer; to provide such a consumer
20 product promotion method and match game in which a match
21 game is displayed along with the product categories; to
22 provide such a consumer product promotion method and match
23 game in which the match game can take the form of a Bingo
24 game or a Keno game; to provide such a consumer product
25 promotion method and match game in which individual product

1 categories are associated with corresponding spaces in the
2 match game and product categories selected by the consumer
3 are compared against the associated categories to detect
4 matches; to provide such a match game in which "instant"
5 prizes are awarded depending upon the number and/or the
6 arrangement of matched product categories; to provide such a
7 consumer product promotion method in which personalized
8 discount and/or refund information is made available for
9 storing or printing for selected products in each of the
10 selected product categories; and to provide such a consumer
11 product promotion method and match game which is readily
12 implementable with existing technology, which provides for
13 effective product promotion with minimal expense, and which
14 results in improved efficiency for participating consumer
15 product manufacturers and enhanced interest for consumers.

16 Other objects and advantages of this invention will
17 become apparent from the following description taken in
18 conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein are set
19 forth, by way of illustration and example, certain
20 embodiments of this invention.

21 The drawings constitute a part of this specification
22 and include exemplary embodiments of the present invention
23 and illustrate various objects and features thereof.

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1 Brief Description of the Drawings

2 Fig. 1 is a block schematic diagram of an interactive
3 electronic system for implementing the inventive interactive
4 consumer product promotion method and match game.

5 Fig. 2 is a flow chart of the procedures a consumer
6 follows in selecting product categories and playing the
7 match game.

8 Fig. 3 is a sample initial display screen for the
9 inventive interactive consumer product promotion method and
10 a Bingo match game.

11
12 Fig. 4 is a sample display screen for the inventive
13 interactive consumer product promotion method and Bingo
14 match game showing matches revealed on the Bingo game which
15 result in an instant winner.

16 Fig. 5 is a sample display screen for the inventive
17 interactive consumer product promotion method and Bingo
18 match game showing all of the product categories stored at
19 each space in the Bingo matrix and with matched category
20 numbers which do not yield an instant winner.

21 Fig. 6 is a sample initial display screen for the
22 inventive interactive consumer product promotion method and
23 a Keno match game.

24 Fig. 7 is a sample display screen for the inventive
25 interactive consumer product promotion method and Keno match

1 game after all of the product category selections have been
2 made and with the randomly generated Keno numbers
3 highlighted to reveal an instant winner.

4 Fig. 8 is a custom personalized rebate form for
5 downloading and printing at remote sites.

6

7 Detailed Description of the Invention

8 As required, detailed embodiments of the present
9 invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be
10 understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely
11 exemplary of the invention, which may be embodied in various
12 forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional
13 details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as
14 limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a
15 representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to
16 variously employ the present invention in virtually any
17 appropriately detailed structure.

18 Referring to Fig. 1, the numeral 1 generally refers to
19 a centralized database for the inventive interactive
20 consumer product promotion method and match game. The
21 database 1 includes a CPU 2 to which are connected graphics
22 and alphanumerics programs 3 suitable for generating an
23 interactive screen display such as the display 4 in Fig. 3.
24 A memory 5 stores consumer product discount and refund
25 information by product category and selected products within

1 each category. A memory 6 stores a match game map in which
2 spaces on a map game matrix are mapped to respective
3 consumer product categories or category numbers. The
4 category numbers for the match game map can be randomly or
5 pseudo-randomly generated by the CPU 2.

6 The CPU 2 is shown connected as an Internet addressable
7 web site location, as indicated at block 11. Access to the
8 Internet by consumers is provided conventionally via
9 Internet Access Providers or On-line services such as
10 America On-Line, Compuserve, etc., all of which are
11 generally indicated at 13, connected to the public telephone
12 system 14. Integral with the web site 11 can be a series of
13 "hot links" to other web sites of participating
14 manufacturers, retailers, etc. In addition to the internet
15 connection, information can be transmitted from the database
16 1 to inquiring consumers or manufacturers via electronic
17 mail. An interactive electronic display for accessing the
18 database 1 can take the form of a personal computer 15, an
19 in-store kiosk 16 and/or an interactive television 21, each
20 of which has access to the public telephone system 14 via
21 respective modems 22. The personal computer 15 has a
22 conventional data entry keyboard 23 associated therewith as
23 well as a monitor 24 and a printer 25. An optional speech
24 recognition module 26 can be attached to the personal
25 computer 15 to allow a consumer to input data via voice as

1 an alternative to or in addition to the keyboard 23. An
2 optional scanner 27 can also be attached to the personal
3 computer 15 for scanning in completed rebate forms and
4 proofs of purchase, as will be explained below. The kiosk
5 16 can include a monitor 31, a keyboard 32, and a printer
6 33. Data entry with the interactive television 21 can be
7 accomplished in a conventional manner via keypad, light pen,
8 speech recognition unit, etc. (not shown).

9

10 I. Bingo Match Game Display Screen

11 Fig. 3 illustrates an initial screen display 4 for
12 display on the personal computer monitor 24, the kiosk
13 monitor 31 or the interactive television 21. The screen
14 display 4 includes a match game area, illustrated here as a
15 Bingo game 41, and a consumer product category display area
16 43, as indicated by the scroll arrows 59. The Bingo game 41
17 is a representation of a conventional Bingo card formed by a
18 matrix of bingo playing spaces 44. One or more of the
19 spaces 44 can be a "FREE SPACE", as shown at 45. Fig. 3
20 illustrates the Bingo game 41 as it is first accessed by a
21 consumer. Each of the playing spaces 44, with the exception
22 of the "FREE SPACE" 45, is "covered" electronically with a
23 uniform symbol, such as the dollar sign 46. As an
24 alternative, the Bingo game spaces 44 can initially
25 collectively display a collage or mosaic (not shown).

1 Within the product category display area 43 are
2 displayed a plurality of product categories 47, each of
3 which includes a numerical reference 48 and a category title
4 49. While 30 categories 47 are illustrated in Fig. 3, it is
5 contemplated that up to 100 or more such categories 47 can
6 be displayed by scrolling the display area 43. An
7 instruction area 51 includes an instruction set 52 for
8 selecting categories 47 and playing the Bingo game 41. A
9 prize window 53 includes a status message 54, such as "PLAY
10 THE GAME!" or a similar invitation. A selected category
11 display area 55 is provided beneath the Bingo game 41 with
12 individual windows 56 for displaying the numerals 48 (Fig.
13 4) of the categories 47 as each category is selected. An
14 additional information window 57 can be provided for an
15 explanation 58 for how an instant prize can be won. Scroll
16 arrows 59 can be displayed for scrolling the category window
17 43.

18

19 **II. Keno Match Game Display Screen**

20 Fig. 6 illustrates an alternative initial screen
21 display 61 for display on the personal computer monitor 24,
22 the kiosk monitor 31 or the interactive television 21. The
23 screen display 61 includes a match game area, illustrated
24 here as a Keno game 62, and a consumer product category
25 display area 43. The product category display area 43 is

1 identical to that illustrated in Figs. 3-5, with a plurality
2 of product categories 47, each of which includes a numerical
3 reference 48 and a category title 49. Again, while 30
4 categories 47 are illustrated in Fig. 6, it is contemplated
5 that up to 100 or more such categories 47 can be displayed
6 by scrolling the display area 43 as indicated by scroll
7 arrows 59. An instruction area 51 includes an instruction
8 set 52 for selecting categories 47 and playing the Keno game
9 62. The Keno game 62 is a Keno number matrix with a
10 plurality of numbers 65, here shown as 1-80. Alternatively,
11 100 or more numbers 65 can be displayed in the Keno game 62,
12 with the number of Keno numbers matching the number of
13 product categories 47. Thus, the numbers 65 correspond to
14 the numerical references 48 of the product categories 47.
15 As in the Bingo version, a prize window 53 includes a status
16 message 54, such as "PLAY THE GAME!" or a similar
17 invitation, a selected category display area 55 is provided
18 beneath the Keno game 62 with individual windows 56 for
19 displaying the numerals 48 of the categories 47 as each
20 category is selected. An additional information window 57
21 can be provided for an explanation 58 for how an instant
22 prize can be won.

23

24

1 III. Consumer Product Promotion Method

2 With reference to Fig. 2, the Product Promotion Method
3 will be described step-by-step with reference to the Bingo
4 Game of Figs. 3-5. At step 71, a consumer has access to an
5 interactive electronic display, such as the personal
6 computer 15, the kiosk 16 or the interactive television 21.
7 For purposes of this discussion, it is assumed that the
8 personal computer 15 is being used. At block 72, the
9 consumer connects the personal computer 15 to the Internet
10 via the Internet Service Provider 13 and selects the web
11 site address 11 of the database 1 via the CPU 2. At block
12 73, in response, the CPU 2 sends the screen display 4 (or
13 61) to the monitor 24 of the personal computer 15. At block
14 74, the consumer reads the instruction set 52, which, when
15 scrolled through, can read somewhat as follows:

16
17 PLEASE SELECT EIGHT PRODUCT CATEGORIES FOR WHICH
18 YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE DISCOUNT AND/OR
19 REFUND/REBATE INFORMATION. AS EACH PRODUCT
20 CATEGORY IS SELECTED, THE CATEGORY NUMBER WILL BE
21 DISPLAYED UNDER THE BINGO GAME CARD ON YOUR
22 SCREEN. ONCE YOU HAVE SELECTED ALL EIGHT
23 CATEGORIES, IF THE NUMBERS OF THE SELECTED
24 CATEGORIES MATCH ANY PRODUCT CATEGORY NUMBERS
25 STORED IN SPACES IN THE BINGO CARD, THOSE SPACES

1 WILL BE REVEALED. IF YOU MATCH FIVE SPACES IN A
2 ROW, EITHER HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY, OR
3 DIAGONALLY, OR IF ALL FOUR CORNERS ARE MATCHED,
4 YOU HAVE WON A PRIZE OF \$1,000.00. IF YOU MATCH
5 ALL EIGHT SELECTED CATEGORIES TO FORM AN "X" ALONG
6 WITH THE FREE SPACE, YOU ARE A GRAND PRIZE WINNER
7 OF \$10,000.00! IN ANY EVENT, AVAILABLE FOR
8 PRINTING ON YOUR PRINTER WILL BE COUPONS AND
9 REFUND OFFERS FOR PARTICIPATING MANUFACTURERS IN
10 THE SELECTED PRODUCT CATEGORIES ALONG WITH AN
11 INDIVIDUALLY PERSONALIZED PRINTED REFUND/REBATE
12 FORM FOR SUBMITTING UPC CODES AND CASH REGISTER
13 RECEIPTS IN ORDER TO GET CASH BACK OR OTHER
14 REWARDS FOR EACH SELECTED PARTICIPATING
15 MANUFACTURER'S PRODUCTS PURCHASED.

16

17 At block 75, the consumer selects eight of the product
18 categories 47, as shown in Fig. 4. At block 82, the CPU 2
19 randomly generates the category numbers associated with the
20 Bingo spaces 44 and then compares the selected category
21 numbers 48 against those in the Bingo spaces 44 and removes
22 the "cover" dollar sign 46 from any of the Bingo spaces 44
23 which match selected product category numbers 48. It should
24 be noted that, for ease of illustration only, each of the
25 revealed Bingo spaces 44 in Figs. 4 and 5 matches a

1 respective one of the first 30 category numbers 48 as shown.
2 In reality, 100 or more categories can be scrolled through
3 and the categories in the Bingo spaces 44 would be randomly
4 selected from the entire 100 categories. At block 83, the
5 CPU 2 determines if the selected category numbers 48 yield a
6 winning combination. For example, four of the selected
7 categories 47 may match categories in the Bingo spaces 44 as
8 illustrated in Fig. 4 to make a winning diagonal line. If
9 the answer is YES, at block 85, a message 54 is flashed in
10 the prize display area 53 on the screen display 4. The
11 message 54 can read, for example:

12 YOU HAVE JUST WON \$1000.00!!

13 Also, at block 85, a menu 90 (Fig. 4) is displayed in a
14 payment window 91 to allow the consumer to select the
15 preferred method of payment from a variety of payment
16 methods. For example, an electronic funds transfer can be
17 made to the consumer's bank account, a credit balance can be
18 added to the consumer's credit card, a gift certificate or
19 credit voucher can be generated for a participating
20 retailer, or a check can be issued and mailed directly to
21 the consumer. Of course, as an alternative to cash, winning
22 combinations can be rewarded with free merchandise from
23 participating retailers or manufacturers. At block 92,
24 payment is made in the selected manner. Alternatively, if
25 no winning combination is detected, at block 93, a

1 consolation message, such as the message 93 in Fig. 5 is
2 generated as all of the Bingo spaces 44 are revealed.

3 Finally, whether or not a winning combination is
4 achieved, at block 95, the CPU 2 prompts the consumer to
5 select specific products from the selected categories 47 for
6 which discount coupon and/or rebate information is desired.

7 At block 96, the CPU 2 sends data to the personal computer
8 15 which will allow it to print discount coupons and rebate
9 information on the printer 25 for the selected products from
10 the product categories 47. Also, at block 96, a rebate
11 custom personalized rebate form similar to a form 101 in
12 Fig. 8 can be sent to the personal computer 15 by the CPU 2
13 for printing on the printer 25. At block 97 the coupons,
14 rebate offers and the personalized form 101 are printed out
15 (or stored for later printing) by the personal computer 15.

16 If Keno is the match game being used, in the method of
17 Fig. 2, instead of the Bingo determination of block 82, at
18 block 98, the CPU 2 randomly generates a combination of
19 twenty numbers from the Keno numbers 1-80 and then checks to
20 see if any of the eight numbers 48 of the selected
21 categories 47 match the randomly generated numbers 65 in the
22 Keno game 62 and a total number of matches is generated.
23 Then, at block 83, again, the CPU 2 determines the prize
24 value, if any, of the number of matches. For example, a
25 minimum of five matches might be required for an initial

1 level prize of \$50, as shown at message 99 in Fig. 7. The
2 prize value can then increase, again as an example only, by
3 a factor of 10 for each additional match to a grand prize of
4 \$50,000 if all eight selected categories match the
5 categories in the Keno game 62. Selection of the prize
6 payment method, printing of coupons and rebate offers and
7 the printing of the rebate form 101 is then accomplished as
8 indicated in blocks 85, 92, 95, 96 and 97, as described
9 above. Although a Keno game has been described where 20
10 numbers are randomly generated out of 80, it should be noted
11 that fewer, or more numbers can be generated depending upon
12 the desired odds to win.

13 As a final step in the method, as indicated at block
14 100, the consumer submits the personalized form, along with
15 proofs of purchase for some or all of the selected products
16 to a fulfillment center for rebate processing. The form and
17 the proofs of purchase can be mailed in or electronically
18 scanned, such as by the scanner 27.

19 Instead of requiring the consumer to select products
20 after playing the game once, as indicated at block 95, they
21 can be given the option to play multiple games, selecting
22 products only when all game play is finished.

23 Referring to Fig. 8, the personalized rebate form 101,
24 for use with the methods of Figs. 1 and 2, is illustrated.
25 The form 101 includes a strip 111 at the top thereof, in

1 which a optional bar code 112 with a consumer ID number can
2 be printed. The bar code 112 is preferably printed in a
3 manner similar to standard scannable bar codes. In
4 addition, or as an alternative, block 113 is provided for
5 pre-printing or hand printing of the consumer's name,
6 address and telephone number.

7 On the left below the strip 111 is an area 114 for UPC
8 code numbers, such as the number 115, from selected
9 participating products. For the consumer's convenience, a
10 plurality of columns 121-124 are provided immediately to the
11 right of the UPC code number 114. The column 121 is for the
12 printed product name and the column 122 is for the rebate
13 value associated with the product, e.g. "\$1.00". The column
14 123 is for the number of products required for the rebate,
15 e.g. "2 boxes". The column 124 is an expiration date, if
16 any, for the promotion. The address for the redemption
17 center is printed at block 125. A block 126 is reserved for
18 totalling up the rebate due while a block 127 is used to
19 indicate the desired method of payment, i.e. check by mail
20 or electronic funds transfer to one of several credit cards.
21 Since electronic funds transfer would be much more
22 economical for the sponsor, this option can be encouraged by
23 the use of incentives, such as additional rebates given by
24 the credit card companies, for example. Finally, an
25 instruction message 128 can be provided to remind the player

1 of the necessary enclosures for a rebate to be issued. As
2 mentioned above, as an alternative to mailing the form 101
3 and the proofs of purchase such as cash register receipts,
4 the consumer can use an electronic scanner such as the
5 scanner 27 to electronically scan them in to the CPU 2.
6 Thus, if electronic funds transfer is selected as the rebate
7 payment method in the block 127 on the form 101, and if the
8 form and the proofs of purchase are electronically scanned
9 in, then the entire rebate transaction can occur
10 electronically.

11 The inventive method is very flexible in that it can be
12 adapted for different markets, regions, or countries.
13 Furthermore, multiple programs can be run simultaneously for
14 different promotions. Match games can be sponsored by
15 different manufacturers or retailers and ads can be
16 displayed on the display screens adjacent to the match game
17 display. Alternatively, ads or logos can be placed over the
18 game matrix spaces as a mosaic in lieu of the dollar signs.

19 The inventive product promotion method is adaptable to
20 any type of product or service such as automobile rebates,
21 cellular or long distance telephone service promotions,
22 travel related services or cable television channel
23 promotions.

24 Although a Bingo game 41 and a Keno game 62 have been
25 illustrated as match games for the inventive consumer

23

1 product promotion method, other match games or games of
2 chance can be used as well. The numbers and types of
3 product categories 47 suggested herein, as well as the prize
4 values and winning combinations, are for example only and
5 are not intended to be limiting. The form 101 is
6 illustrative only and, clearly, other arrangements of fields
7 could be designed which are equally effective.

8 It is thus to be understood that while certain forms of
9 the present invention have been illustrated and described
10 herein, it is not to be limited to the specific forms or
11 arrangement of parts described and shown.

12

24